

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A smooth-bore shotgun or shooting rifle cartridge and wad comprising:

a case having an end percussion cap;

a firing charge in said case;

5 a wad for accommodating small shot, said wad having a base turned towards the firing charge and a cylindrical lateral wall extending from a base towards a direction of firing, said cylindrical lateral wall and the case defining an annular space between them for substantially preventing an expansion of the small shot over a cross section of the barrel.

2. A cartridge and wad in accordance with claim 1, wherein the base has a diameter equal to

10 a gauge of the cartridge and a diameter of the cylindrical lateral wall is less than the diameter of said base.

3. A cartridge and wad in accordance with claim 2, in which the diameter of the cylindrical lateral wall is at least one gauge less than the gauge of the base.

4. A cartridge and wad in accordance with claim 1, wherein the wad includes a whole or
15 segmented annular element close to an opening of the case for centering and guiding the wad during its sliding in the barrel of the rifle.

5. A cartridge and wad in accordance with claim 4, wherein the wad has a plurality of

longitudinal cuts along an end annular portion of the lateral wall of the wad, the annular element being provided below said end annular portion.

6. A cartridge and wad in accordance with claim 1, wherein said lateral wall has a plurality of longitudinal ribs for centering and guiding the wad during its sliding in the barrel of the rifle.

5 7. A cartridge and wad in accordance with claim 2, wherein said base has an annular upper surface protruding externally from the cylindrical lateral wall and the annular surface has a conical course converging downwards.

8. A cartridge and wad in accordance with claim 1, further comprising steel shoot disposed in said wad.

10 9. A cartridge and wad for steel small shot for cartridges of smooth-bore shotguns or shooting rifles, comprising:

 a case having an end percussion cap and containing a firing charge; and

 a wad above the firing charge for accommodating steel small shot, said wad having a base turned towards said firing charge and two concentric cylindrical walls extending from said base
15 towards the direction of firing, said walls including an external wall having a diameter equal to the gauge of the cartridge and an internal wall intended for accommodating the steel small shot, said internal wall having a diameter less than the gauge of the cartridge by one gauge.

10. A cartridge and wad in accordance with claim 9, wherein said external wall has a plurality of longitudinal cuts.

11. A cartridge and wad in accordance with claim 9, wherein said external wall has a height equal to about one third of said internal wall.

5 12. A wad for receiving steel small shot for cartridges of smooth-bore shotguns or shooting rifles, in which each cartridge comprises a case having an end percussion cap and a firing charge, the case having a diameter, the wad comprising:

a base turned to be disposed adjacent to the firing charge;

a cylindrical lateral wall extending from a base towards a direction of firing; and

10 a spacer means for defining an annular space between a diameter of the cartridge and a diameter of said cylindrical lateral wall.

13. A wad in accordance with claim 12, wherein the base has a diameter equal to a gauge of the cartridge and a diameter of the cylindrical lateral wall is less than the diameter of said base.

15 14. A wad in accordance with claim 13, in which the diameter of the cylindrical lateral wall is at least one gauge less than the gauge of the base.

15. A wad in accordance with claim 13, wherein the wad includes a whole or segmented annular element close to an opening of the case for centering and guiding the wad during its sliding

in the barrel of the rifle.

16. A wad in accordance with claim 13, wherein the wad has a plurality of longitudinal cuts along an end annular portion of the lateral wall of the wad, the annular element being provided below said end annular portion.

5 17. A wad in accordance with claim 12, wherein said spacer comprises a plurality of longitudinal ribs connected to said cylindrical lateral wall for centering and guiding the wad during its sliding in the barrel of the rifle.

10 18. A wad in accordance with claim 13, wherein said base has an annular upper surface protruding externally from the cylindrical lateral wall and the annular surface has a conical course converging downwards.

19. A wad in accordance with claim 12, wherein said spacer comprises an outer cylindrical wall extending concentrically to said cylindrical lateral wall from said base towards the direction of firing, said outer wall having a diameter equal to the gauge of the cartridge.

20. A wad in accordance with claim 12, further comprising steel shoot disposed in said wad.